



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

June 28, 2005

# News Release

## **ICE BUSTS 34 ARMS AND DRUG DEALERS IN MULTI-AGENCY EFFORT**

***50 ICE agents deployed to public housing project in support of "Project Safe Neighborhood"***

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), along with other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, today announced the arrests of 34 United States citizens in the Vista Hermosa public housing project in the municipality of Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

The operation was part of the San Juan High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area's (HIDTA) project safe neighborhood, a nationwide initiative to reduce gun crime and other illegal activities in any high crime area.

ICE worked alongside the U.S. Marshals, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigations Division (IRS); the Bureau of Arms, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and the Puerto Rico Police Department.

The multi-agency investigation revealed that several organizations were using the Vista Hermosa public housing project for the distribution of narcotics and guns and the laundering of the proceeds generated by this illegal activity.

"To prevail, law enforcement agencies must work as a unified team and this is exactly what we have done here," said ICE's Acting Special Agent-in-Charge Lydia St. John-Mellado. "ICE, as well as other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, has embraced the concept of cooperation and camaraderie very responsibly to produce these kind of results."

The 34 arrested this morning are in U.S. Marshals custody and have been charged with violations to Title 21 United States Code Sections 841, 846, 952 and Title 18 United States Code Sections 2, 924 and 982.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*